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EXCISE

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Cuba

Cuba

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10/24

October 26, 1962

TO : The Secretary
THROUGH: S/S
FROM : INR - Roger Hilsman

Rog Hilsman

SUBJECT: Khrushchev's Conversation with Mr. W. E. Knox,
President Westinghouse Electrical International,
Moscow, October 24

Following are the Khrushchev remarks relating to
Cuba made to Mr. Knox at the above conversation
according to Mr. Knox's report:

1. Khrushchev was loath to think that what occurred on October 22 was done for electoral reasons. It appeared to stem from hysteria. The President was a very young man; in fact Khrushchev's own son was older. Khrushchev had had his differences with Eisenhower but was confident that Eisenhower would have done things differently.
2. Except in time of war, a blockade is illegal. If the US stopped and searched Soviet ships, this would be piracy.
3. Khrushchev repeated several times that Soviet ships were unarmed, that some may turn around and that some would be stopped, but sooner or later the Soviet Union would send its submarines to sink the ships that were stopping the Soviet ships.
4. The United States is now unable to take over Cuba.
5. To Mr. Knox's comment that the President was infuriated because he had been assured that the Soviet Union would not send offensive weapons to Cuba and found that he had been lied to, Khrushchev replied with a half hour discussion on the distinction between offensive and defensive weapons. The US said that its Turkish bases were defensive but what was the range of the

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missiles there.

6. Khrushchev then stated specifically that the Soviet Union had no anti-aircraft missile in Cuba as well as ballistic missiles with both conventional and nuclear warheads. The Cubans were too temperamental to turn over these weapons to them; for this reason all sophisticated military equipment (sic) were under direct, 100 per cent Soviet control. They would never be fired except in defense of Cuba and then only on the personal instructions from Khrushchev as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Khrushchev added that if the United States did not believe this it should attack Cuba and it would find out the answer. Guantanamo would disappear the first day.

7. Khrushchev would like to talk with the President. He had planned to attend the United Nations this fall, but the United Nations is a place for arguing, not a place for negotiating. He would be delighted to visit the President or for the President to visit him or a rendezvous at sea or anywhere else. A summit was desirable and it should not be a circus.

8. What occurred on October 22 was particularly disappointing because Secretary Rusk and Foreign Minister Gromyko had practically agreed on the nuclear test problem, on the Polish-German and Czech-German frontier, and on non-dissemination of hostile propaganda in both East and West Berlin.

9. Khrushchev told his familiar story about a man who had learned to get along with a smelly goat even though he did not like the goat. The Soviet Union had its goats in Italy, Greece, etc. and was living with them. The US now had its goat in Cuba.

10. Khrushchev stated that he had been making an effort to get China and India together and had persuaded Chou En-Lai to write to Nehru a proposal for a 20-mile pull back of both sides and for negotiations.

Participants in the conversation in which Mr. Knox gave the above report were: Mr. Richard H. Davis, EUR, Mr. John Guthrie, SOV, [REDACTED], CIA, and Mr. Helmut Sonnenfeldt, INR. E

Mr. Knox is scheduled to see Mr. McGhee at 3:30 this afternoon.

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